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ABSTRACT

Theme I of the Ad Hoc Conference on the Education of Migrants was "measures to improve the position of the immigrant and his family at the time of arrival in the host country (including measures taken in the sending country on behalf of those intending to emigrate), primarily in respect of their educational circumstances". This report presents an initial reflection of the theme itself. Major topics briefly discussed are: (1) the migrant families; (2) separation of families; (3) reunion of families; (4) the school in relation to the family; and (5) the school as a cultural factor. Recommendations are given for: government action; research; information; and education. The appendices include the: (1) abridged text of the Resolution concerning the situation of migrant workers and their families, adopted by the European Ministers of Labour (Rome, November 1972); and (2) Resolution (72) 18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on methods of compiling statistics on the international migration of workers. (NQ)

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ON THE EDUCATION OF MIGRANTS

Strasbourg, 5 - 8 November 1974

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INTRODUCTORY REPORT ON THEME I

The position of the immigrant and his family on arrival in the host country

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STANDING CONFERENCE OF

EUROPEAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION

AD HOC CONFERENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF MIGRANTS

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INTRODUCTORY REPORT ON THEME I

"Measures to improve the position of the immigrant and his family at the time of arrival in the host country (including measures taken in the sending country on behalf of those intending to emigrate), primarily in respect of their educational circumstances"

by

Mrs. Emma MORIN

Counsellor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(Italy)

CME/HF-M (74) I

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CONTENTS

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	THE COUNTRY REPORTS	3
III.	WHAT FAMILIES ?	3
IV.	THE SEPARATION OF FAMILIES	4
V.	THE REUNITING OF FAMILIES	6
VI.	THE SCHOOL IN RELATION TO THE FAMILY	7
VII.	THE SCHOOL AS A CULTURAL FACTOR	9
VIII.	RECOMMENDATIONS	12

Appendix A : Text (abridged) of the Resolution concerning the situation of migrant workers and their families, adopted by the European Ministers of Labour at their Conference in Rome, November 1972 14

Appendix B : Resolution (72) 18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on methods of compiling statistics on the international migration of workers (with explanatory memorandum) 16

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The theme itself calls for an initial reflection, for it is significant of the way in which problems affecting emigrant families have been viewed and tackled.

2. First, what do we mean by "the position of the immigrant and his family at the time of arrival"? Are we treating the moment of arrival as a fact simultaneously concerning the immigrant and his family? Clearly this is a misinterpretation, since the families - much against their will, be it said - do not arrive actually with the immigrant, but only after a period of varying length, during which the husband is separated from his wife and children. Is it really meaningful to speak, then, of the position on arrival as if this were a particular moment in time, singled out from its context? If it is true that the moment is a difficult one, it is at best arbitrary, and certainly theoretical, to try to improve it while removing it from its total context.

3. Secondly, we must see how the question of the migrant's family has been approached and treated up to now both by the emigration and the host countries. Is the centre of interest really the family moving from one country to another? That may well be doubted, considering the attitudes and measures adopted to date.

   3.1 When speaking of 'the immigrant worker and his family' it is upon the worker that the accent is placed: the family is a consequence, an appendage that must be dealt with simply because it exists, even if it is at times an embarrassment.

   3.2 Though work is doubtless the cause that moves millions of men to leave their country for another, if we want to consider them, along with their families, as human beings, it is not simply by reference to their work that we can succeed in defining their situation as it really is - that is: in human, social and economic terms. However, up to now, the family has been presented in a very restricted perspective and efforts have been made to keep the field of view as restricted as possible.

   3.3 The worker must separate from his family and remain separated for some time: the resulting situation is not wholly unwelcome to the two countries interested by the labour aspect. For the emigration country, the fact that the worker sends his savings to his family is an asset to the balance of payments. For the host country, a man on his own who does the 'dirty work' spurned by others represents less bother and fewer complications from all points of view - housing, welfare, leisure activities, not to mention education. Thus the problems to be solved may bear no relation at all to those experienced by migrants' families, save perhaps for a few aspects. The fact is that attention is given to the problems raised by the migrants's families rather than worrying - or at any rate enquiring - about the problems faced by the families themselves.

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3.4 If there is a desire to take an interest in the family, the family must be viewed for what it is: a group of people of different ages seeking answers to their needs by setting up a network of changing relationships, both inside and outside their own circle. The move to another country is bound up with the dynamics of family interaction. The very fact of the move, with all that it entails - the new contacts with men and things unknown - could be an educational opportunity in the broadest sense of the term.

3.5 If this approach is taken, education cannot be regarded as something special to which heed must be paid at a particular moment in time. We are dealing with a process that develops parallel with emigration and during the whole of its course. Thus viewed, emigration could become a source of human and social enrichment for the whole family, young and old.

4. It follows from this that the conditions of arrival cannot be improved by separating this moment from a process of which it is but one of the stages, preceded by a whole series of experiences making up the invisible baggage brought along by the family. It is the existence of this 'baggage', such as it is, which must be borne in mind if migration is to result in something of value for the migrant's family. The result should be something rather different from declarations of principle and of law which create situations of non-discrimination that are solely theoretical and in fact co-exist with reactions based on prejudices and stereotypes.

5. Differences between immigrants and natives exist since it is precisely because of these differences that families leave their home countries. Furthermore, it is the families who are the first to become aware of them - and their reactions, be they positive or negative, should be taken into consideration if we wish to give them practical help. It is only by reference to the realities of emigration as they are lived by the families themselves in all their manifold aspects that we shall arrive at "a common minimum of social treatment", at that European "common law" advocated by Edgar Faure.

6. Finally, we must give some thought to the underlying aim of measures designed to improve, from the outset, the lot of migrants' families. Is that aim to be adaptation, integration, assimilation or implantation? If the emphasis is to be on respect for the family, from the human, social and cultural point of view, then it is full-scale implantation that must be sought. We must take practical steps to ensure that families are implanted to the greatest possible extent into the host community, and this calls for parallel action in two directions. It is not only the new arrivals who need information, help and guidance towards becoming part and parcel of the new environment: a campaign to inform the local inhabitants is equally necessary. If living together is to be a practical proposition, efforts to achieve mutual understanding are essential, and the meeting of different cultures could - and should - be a chance of enrichment for immigrants and natives alike.

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II. THE COUNTRY REPORTS

7. Of the 19 countries which have sent in reports, 11 are immigration countries and 8 provide the emigrants (4 of the second category being somewhat special cases in that emigration is almost exclusively to a single destination).

8. Almost all the migrants come from Mediterranean countries, and even in host countries where there are larger groups coming from elsewhere there is always a contingent from the Mediterranean area.

9. The migrant family is not dealt with as a separate topic among the questions raised in the guidelines for the drafting of the reports (1), and as a result the subject is treated indirectly and indeed only in connexion with the children's schooling.

III. WHAT FAMILIES ?

10. Before tackling the subject of the migrant's family, it would be desirable to know who exactly are the immigrants whose situation we wish to improve. It would seem fairly obvious that the intention is to limit ourselves to "families of migrant workers" (2) and that clandestine, seasonal and pseudo-seasonal workers are to be left out of account. One may well ask whether this is due to the fact that the situation of these latter families raises no problems and hence needs no improvement. In that case, it would be entirely logical to say nothing about them. In reality, exactly the contrary is true. The situation of these families is difficult, painful and at times even dramatic. On the other hand, their problems may be attributed to a perfectly simple fact, namely that these families do not exist. Clandestine workers are just "not seen", and seasonal workers find employment precisely because they agree to live apart from their families.

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(1) See Appendix to document CME/HF-M (74) V, 'Country Reports'

(2) "Migrant worker" within the meaning of the revised preliminary draft of the European convention on the legal status of migrant workers, viz. a national of a contracting party who has been authorised by another contracting party to stay on its territory to engage in paid employment there.

IV. THE SEPARATION OF FAMILIES

11. Even though no statistics are available on this subject, it may be said that hundreds of thousands of persons, all belonging to family groups, are separated because the breadwinner has emigrated. There lies the problem: separation, which directly and negatively affects the family in its entirety and is deeply felt by the whole group throughout the migration process. Since arrival presupposes departure, to improve the situ tion on arrival one should begin by taking an interest in the situation on departure.

12. While the preparation of migrants prior to departure is manifestly of interest to both the sending and the receiving countries, it is the sending countries which are capable at this stage of playing a direct and active part: first, by ensuring that the would-be migrant and his family receive in good time all information that will help to reduce misunderstandings and improve contacts in their future environment, and secondly, by enabling all members of the family, through instruction in the host country's language, to communicate, as far as possible, with the natives on arrival.

13. Action taken in emigration countries seems to have met with a number of difficulties, among which the reports single out the following: the scattered nature and remoteness of rural populations, lack of information on the countries of destination, mistrust of official information channels, the variety of public and private bodies involved, and the lack - or insufficiency - of liaison between their activities.

    Special efforts towards the preparation of emigrants are made in Ireland and Finland:

    - in Ireland, since 1969, an Advisory Committee has been in charge of services to emigrants (both those who wish to leave and those who wish to come back) ;

    - in Finland the main attention is focused on Finns desiring to emigrate to Sweden, and they are given special information on the school system.

    It should be noted that in these two countries official information is given - alongside details of foreign countries concerned - on employment opportunities in the sending country itself.

14. In the host countries, apart from the fairly widespread production of brochures in the immigrant's language, action is also taken on a bilateral basis (as, for example, the framework agreement between Austria and Yugoslavia on specialised training for Yugoslav workers).

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15. With regard to the results, it is interesting to quote from the report presented by Italy (1) to the Conference of European Ministers of Labour which was held in Rome in November 1972 :

> "The most common sources of information for workers looking for a job abroad are still letters from expatriate relatives, friends and acquaintances, who provide vague and sometimes distorted information, an added complication being their general inability to express themselves clearly in writing.
>
> People complain that most emigration, notably that to the Community countries, by-passes official channels. This is obviously imputable, particularly in Italy, to the traditional mistrust towards public authorities, but there can be no doubt that the main blame lies with the authorities themselves, since they are unable to communicate with those concerned and gain their confidence by demonstrating that they can provide flexible and effective help of the right kind. And so workers leave their home countries with little or no knowledge of the availability and nature of jobs, wage levels and working conditions in the immigration country, not to mention its social and cultural characteristics and the language, laws, customs and traditions of the people among whom they will be living."

The results would thus appear somewhat discouraging. But would it not be realistic to take these considerations as a basis for finding out what information it would be useful - and instructive - to give to future migrants, and by what means?

16. It may be said that not enough thought has been given to the fact that the fundamental ambivalence of emigration begins even before departure. On the one hand (in the sending country), men need to earn or improve their living; on the other (in the host country), there is a need for labour - especially for the kind of 'dirty work' that the locals no longer wish to do. It is by taking this point of view that we can understand why work is, and remains, the focal point of information on the host countries and even the primary motivation for teaching their languages.

17. So far as concerns the vast and involved context of which work is only a part, no valid solutions can yet be said to have been found.

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(1) "Information supplied by the Italian members of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference", Council of Europe Secretariat document CMT (72) 6, Part III, page 2. See also Appendix A for the text (abridged) of the Resolution adopted by the Conference concerning the situation of migrant workers and their families in Europe.

18. However, it is in this context that separation must be seen: the initial human and social cost paid by the family towards emigration. The father of the family, the breadwinner, obviously knows that he must go off on his own. But even if he has accepted the fact, it remains none the less an imposition and in any event it may be doubted whether he has understood the conditions to be fulfilled before family reunion can one day become feasible. As for his wife, it is highly unlikely that she willingly agrees to be separated from her husband. The forced separation risks therefore being counter-productive in terms of the preparation of the wife and children for departure, since they will have the feeling that they are rejected by the country where, in principle, they should have the right to live.

19. Preparation of the womenfolk, as wives and mothers, does not seem to interest the responsible bodies overmuch. But they show more concern in the case of working women, on whose behalf action taken is the same as for men.

V. THE REUNITING OF FAMILIES

20. After the head of family has left, the difficulties of reunion begin, housing being the stumbling-block.

21. The worker and his family should receive as much information and guidance on this subject as possible. Depending upon the regions whence the majority of migrants come, they receive little or no information concerning contracts, leases, rents and auxiliary matters. The first need, then, is to provide that information, to translate into understandable terms the jargon on forms to be filled in, to explain bureaucratic procedures to them and warn them against speculators.

22. In the host countries, social service staff speaking the immigrant's language should help him with these matters. This could result in better preparation, indirectly, of the wife and hence of the family for departure, since the immigrant would then be able to furnish her with useful information.

Problems raised by seeking accommodation, whose availability is a prerequisite for family reunion, are too well known to need repetition here. Even though the law may grant equal treatment to all tenants, migrant workers often have greater difficulty than the local population in finding houses. Specific measures should be taken by the host countries to make low-cost housing available to immigrant families. Here we may quote what has been done in certain countries, most notably :

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- in France, where the Fonds d'Action Sociale has been entrusted with supplementing efforts already made on behalf of foreign families by the HLM (low-cost housing) groups and by other public and private bodies ;

- in Germany, under a Federal Act (1.1.71) which, by transferring a portion of rental charges to the State, guarantees the worker a housing allowance (Wohngeld) varying with his wage, the rent asked, the composition of his family and the type of housing ;

- in Belgium, where migrants have access to low-cost housing on the same terms as Belgian workers (an opportunity of which, it appears, they have made ample use) ;

- in Switzerland, where foreign workers enjoy, on the same terms as the Swiss, access to low-cost accommodation, and the same tenant protection ;

- in Luxembourg, where great efforts have been made in cooperation with employers to provide foreign workers with decent and inexpensive housing.

23. Despite all these measures the housing situation of migrants remains critical. Its improvement should continue to be a priority concern of the governments of host countries.

VI. THE SCHOOL IN RELATION TO THE FAMILY

24. "As a rule, migrant workers have very little knowledge of Belgian school legislation and retain in Belgium habits they have acquired in their home countries of origin. Families from isolated villages, where no schooling facilities exist, are astonished to find themselves facing legal pressure to send their children to school. Older girls, in particular, are kept at home to do the housework and look after younger children ... Furthermore, for all who wish to work and earn a living, the 14th birthday cannot come soon enough." (1)

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(1) Country report - Belgium (CME/HF-M (73) 16, p. 12)

Everything, or nearly everything, is said here about :

- what parents with school-age children do not know concerning the school system, whence the lack of information on this subject may be deduced ;

- attitudes of parents towards measures they are not expecting ;

- the need felt by the migrant's family to earn money as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the remarks we have just made point once again to the ambivalent relationship between immigrants and the host country - a situation liable to create tensions even where, as in Belgium, notable efforts have been made in regard to the schooling of migrants' children.

A positive relationship between school and child cannot be based on 'pressures'. Behind the child, whom 'pressures' have succeeded in getting to school, stands the family with its incomprehension of the environment of which the school is an expression. Misunderstanding and tension may arise, all because of an institution, the school, which should not be insensitive to education problems even if the education in question is other than that which results from the strict application of laws and curricula.

25. The children's school could and should become an opportunity for the better implanting of the parents into the new environment. Its role in educating the young should be extended, by realistic practical steps, to adults and indeed to the whole of the family. Certain host countries have made praiseworthy efforts in this direction - for example :

- the United Kingdom, where, in addition to leaflets and other information handed out to immigrants on arrival, the schools make use of interpreters at enrolment times, and the local education authorities, to ensure liaison between school and home, employ social workers speaking the immigrant's language ;

- Germany, where the Kultusministerkonferenz has recommended that foreign parents should take part in the work of parents' committees in the same capacity as nationals. As from 1970, the idea launched to mark International Education Year, namely that foreign children should be given help with their homework, has been put into practice using young volunteers recruited by the school authorities in cooperation with private welfare services ;

- Switzerland, where teachers and the school authorities hold parent meetings and evening gatherings for the benefit of foreign parents, "... more and more using the language of the parents concerned". Regional information centres have been officially advocated (and they already exist in Berne and Zürich, with the participation of Italian-speaking psychologists). In the Canton of Zürich, the Directorate of Education has recommended that an advisory committee of parents of foreign mother tongue should cooperate on matters affecting their children's schooling ;

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- Belgium, where migrant workers are contacted with a view to placing their younger children in nursery schools. Still in regard to kindergarten, the State University of Mons has been carrying on for the last 3 years a research and action programme designed "... to clarify and counteract educational difficulties created by the environment of socially deprived children between the ages of 3 and 7, many of foreign extraction" ;

- France, where there has been a remarkable research effort in this field. In 1972 the Ministry of Education set up a Documentation Centre for the Training of Foreigners, whose terms of reference were "... to collect the extensive information available on this subject and to circulate it amongst all the potential users, thus enabling practitioners to draw on the reservoir of experience gained". Further research concerns adults. "... the Ministries of Education and Labour have looked at the activities undertaken at regional level which were clearly innovatory in character and have tried to facilitate their further development either by suggesting specific schemes (in conjunction with the teaching profession or the regional promoters) or by means of subsidies combined with the support of some outside study organisation such as CREDIF, IRFED or the Association du Centre Universitaire de coopération économique et sociale (ACUCES)".

VII. THE SCHOOL AS A CULTURAL FACTOR

26. As regards what the school might do towards respecting the cultures of migrants' children, we feel that particular importance attaches to the report by Mr. A. Verdoodt entitled "Linguistic problems of adult migrant workers and socio-linguistic problems of migrant workers' children being educated in the host country". (1) Starting from the arguments that in the host countries ...

- there are no primary or secondary schools where instruction is mainly in the language of the country of origin (except in Belgium, where there are three Italian schools, two primary and one secondary, and two Spanish, one primary and one secondary),

- there are no ministerial departments responsible for the linguistic status of migrant workers and their children,

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(1) Council of Europe document CCC/ESR (73) 6.

Mr. Verdoodt concludes that migrants have no linguistic rights that are actively encouraged, but only those which are passively tolerated (1), for they are "... a minority enjoying little or no protection".

The desired solution is one which would allow of bilingualism combined with diglossia (2) :

> "This can be achieved if the migrant community manages to use its old and new languages for quite separate purposes and matters, as well as obtain ready access to instruction in both languages. In a community of this kind, children born abroad can begin to learn their mother tongue at home and at primary school, and they can improve their proficiency in their mother tongue and acquire a proper grounding in the host country's language at secondary school and in their contacts with authorities and the world of work. The problem that would arise should they return to their countries of origin are reduced to a minimum."

27. The arguments adduced by Mr. Verdoodt on behalf of migrants' linguistic rights are as follows :

- migrant workers will feel more at home in the host country and will therefore be more willing to go or return there ;
- there will be no danger of migrant groups losing, along with their language, certain specific qualities which were the reason for their being invited to the host country in the first place ;
- the presence of people with different languages and traditions will be a source of cultural enrichment for the host country ;
- it is in a country's economic interests to keep a reservoir of bilingual people to form a kind of bridge, both now and in the future, between it and the different emigration countries.

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(1) Actively encouraged linguistic rights, in all cases, presuppose that the host country's authorities at national, provincial or municipal level give official recognition to the migrants' language in some practical way, such as by publishing notices in the language, having it taught in State or State-subsidised schools or purchasing books in the language for public libraries. Passively tolerated linguistic rights, on the other hand, merely permit the migrants' language to be used in fields where the host country's government is not primarily responsible - the publication of newspapers, or the running of private evening classes, schools and libraries (op.cit. pp. 5-6).

(2) Bilingualism is essentially a feature of an individual's behaviour; diglossia denotes the use of two languages by a whole community according to a set pattern (op.cit. p. 10).

28. Is it utopian to imagine that a linguistic policy in this sense may be adopted? Probably so, if the present state of affairs in the teaching of languages is any guide. However, if we look the facts in the face, we may note that :

- results obtained to date are far from convincing: at best they are fragmentary and difficult to transpose from a given situation to another ;

- even the best action in this field is taken with an eye to objectives that are primarily immediate and utilitarian, with the result that the migrants, adults and children alike, are torn between two languages (and two cultures) without being thoroughly versed in either and, moreover, with no real possibility of making a choice.

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VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

No action on behalf of migrant workers' families is possible unless emigration and host countries are politically resolved to take it. Any action must strive to achieve their complete implantation in the host environment. If preparation and guidance, indeed anything done to help migrant families, can be planned and executed in an educational spirit in the broadest sense of the term, such families should one day be able to select the options best suited to them, responsibly and in full knowledge of the facts, and to decide for themselves whether they wish to settle in the host country or to return home.

A. Action by Governments

(i) Governmental action should be preceded by inquiries aimed at procuring precise statistics, viz.:

- number of families already installed in the host country ;
- number of separated families planning to emigrate ;
- their destinations. (1)

(ii) On the basis of such data the Governments concerned should take practical steps to :

- reduce the period of separation as much as possible ;
- ensure that immigrant families enjoy the same social protection as the families of indigenous workers ;
- make certain that the breadwinner fulfils his maintenance obligations towards members of his family left behind in his home country, and safeguard their right to social security and family allowances ;
- sponsor access by migrant families to low-cost housing.

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(1) See Appendix B for the text of the Resolution adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in May 1972 on methods of compiling statistics on the international migration of workers.

B. Research

(i) Systematic research into the situation of migrants' families should be encouraged and supported by the countries concerned (emigration and host countries) and by international organisations.

(ii) Case studies would be especially valuable: they should relate both to families having already emigrated and to those planning to move. They should lead to a better understanding of the human, social, cultural and economic problems involved, as well as to indications and suggestions as to the most productive forms of action.

(iii) In the field of language teaching for adults and children research combined with an analysis and assessment of action already under way should lead to the choice, promotion and diffusion of the most suitable instructional methods.

C. Information

(i) The main effort on behalf of migrants should be to seek the proper channels for distributing all useful information, both prior to departure and on arrival. Solutions must be found at local level. Private initiative, voluntary associations and groups of volunteers could all be used (as, for example, in the Netherlands).

(ii) At local level, for the population of the host country, various types of meeting should be arranged (information and discussion groups, drama evenings etc.). Multilateral cooperation between immigration and emigration countries would be helpful in promoting exchanges of persons (teachers, social workers, volunteer groups), who, in the various countries, should take local action. Knowledge and comparison of the problems and ideas of both sides should enable the initiatives taken to be appreciated at their true worth. If all concerned received better briefing the result should, in the final analysis, be a more useful type of information, more easily understood by the migrants.

D. Education

(i) Special attention must be given to school services for children and to the promotion of all forms of educational activities for adults. The most varied kinds of action may be envisaged, their content and organisation being necessarily adapted to different groups and environments.

(ii) Action taken should be designed, so far as possible, not only to avoid tension but also to encourage exchanges between different cultures to the ultimate enrichment of immigrants and natives alike.

APPENDIX A

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS OF LABOUR

Rome, 23 - 25 November 1972

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE SITUATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN EUROPE

The Ministers taking part in the Conference of European Ministers of Labour, meeting in Rome on 23 - 25 November 1972....

Noting the efforts deployed in the matter of migration by the intergovernmental organisations, especially by the Council of Europe, and in particular the impetus given by the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-Population,

Considering nevertheless that it is necessary to give constant attention to the situation of migrant workers and their families, while taking account of what is done in international bodies other than the Council of Europe,

Considering that the integration of migrant workers and their families into the society of the host countries needs to be facilitated.....

Believing that in the field of the protection of migrant workers and their families still greater progress could be made both in emigration and immigration countries,

RECOMMEND the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe :

(1) to invite the Governments of member States of the Council of Europe

(a) to give their full support to the Council of Europe's action in defence of fundamental human rights, especially those of the worker, including the migrant worker,

(b) to ensure that migrant workers lawfully employed are placed on an equal footing with national workers where working and living conditions are concerned,

(c) to encourage at European level international cooperation and coordination of action in order to achieve the most effective protection of migrant workers and their families,

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(d) .....

(e) to promote participation of migrant workers and their families in the local community life of the immigration countries, and, in particular, to take all the necessary steps to provide the most satisfactory schooling for the children of migrant workers in the host countries, and to expedite a solution to the problem of housing (on which family reunion very largely depends) by implementing, inter alia, a programme of international cooperation which also takes account of the possibility of making wider use of the Council of Europe Resettlement Fund,

(f) .....

(g) to provide facilities, as necessary, for vocational and linguistic preparation for migrant workers before their departure from their home countries ;

(h) .....

(2) to consider the following action :

(a) to undertake a study in depth of the social and economic repercussions of economic recessions with a view to suggesting, as far as possible, practical solutions for the protection of migrant workers and their families,

(b) .....

(c) .....

(d) to develop the action already undertaken by the Council of Europe in such fields as reception, language teaching, vocational training, recognition of professional qualifications and diplomas, as well as their standardisation and equivalence, education of children, housing and family reunion, as well as safety at work for migrant workers, and to take all appropriate supplementary action for the protection of migrant workers and their families, in particular by drafting a European instrument to repress the undesirable practices of which foreign workers may fall victim,

(e) to centralise and distribute all information likely to help regularise migratory movements between European countries, and to suggest to member States ways in which the return of migrants to their countries of origin might be facilitated.

APPENDIX B

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

RESOLUTION (72) 18

METHODS OF COMPILING STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OF WORKERS

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 May 1972 at the 211th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers,

Considering that the statistical data of the majority of the member States of the Council of Europe do not provide complete and comparable information either from the quantitative or from the qualitative point of view in the field of internal European migrations;

Noting that the extent of migrations in Europe, their recent evolution and their supposed future evolution as well as the constantly increasing mobility of migrants, particularly between immigration countries, renders the compiling of statistics more and more complex;

Emphasising the importance of a knowledge of international migrations and of the fundamental characteristics of the entire foreign population in each member State, considered as an element of economic, social and demographic policy;

Commending the efforts made by different States in order to arrive at a better knowledge of the situation and movements of the alien population;

Considering that co-operation in this sphere between the appropriate authorities of member States in the pursuit of greater unity between them conforms to the aim of the Council of Europe, as defined in Article 1 of its Statute,

Decides

I. to recommend to the governments of member States :

A. that an effort be made to gather the maximum amount of data on the movements and situation of the alien population, in particular as regards :

- nationality,
- present and previous residence,
- family situation (including if possible members of the immediate family who have remained in their home country),

- vocational situation (e.g. as regards work, employer and place of work and the vocational qualification of the worker),
- literacy and knowledge of the language of the adopted country

of all aliens within the territories of the member States, by means of :

1. improvements in the efficiency of the statistical approach within the framework of :

(a) the census : questionnaires to be drawn up for a general population census should reveal as many as possible of the details referred to above;

(b) population records which are particularly essential. This would involve making an effort to discover the incidence of departures for foreign countries, using the system of the permanent inventory;

(c) the records of social security bodies;

(d) other sources of statistics which may have a useful complementary function, such as enquiries and special censuses etc. ;

2. increased co-ordination between the selected sources of statistics, in particular between :

(a) those deriving from social security bodies and from employers;

(b) population registers and all other registers;

(c) State population statistics obtained by the general population census and population registers;

(d) work permit records and those of social security bodies;

(e) all other sources and those mentioned above;

B. to make the most of the entire process of compiling statistics by :

1. centralising information at national level, preferably by automatic classification through electronic media and possibly by informing a central office for statistics in each country;

2. an efficient use of data which may be obtained by such means as :

(a) electronic processing of information received and by comparing statistics relative to the situation and movement of migrants in order to establish a rational classification of alien population;

(b) an improved presentation of results by the publishing of tables at close intervals if possible;

3. international collaboration between the statistical services of the European countries in order to :

(a) study the problems arising out of the harmonisation (for purely statistical reasons) of certain concepts such as population, the registration period, usual residence, minimum age of aliens to be classified as individuals for statistical purposes, family records;

(b) study the harmonisation of regulations on the registration and notice of departure of migrants;

(c) engage in exchanges of views before the introduction of any new measure into the national statistical systems, such as the national reference number and the adoption of an international social security card;

(d) synchronise the dates on which overall assessments should be produced by the Central Statistical Offices;

(e) attempt to standardise the presentation of a minimum number of statistical tables;

(f) carry out a periodical comparison of recapitulatory results and study any differences in them;

II. to invite the govemments of member States to report every four years to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the action they have taken on this resolution.

Strasbourg, 13 June 1972

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO RESOLUTION (72) 18

ON METHODS OF COMPILING STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OF WORKERS

1. For an understanding of the problems involved in compiling migration statistics, it is first necessary to outline briefly the most striking features of the migration phenomenon in present-day Europe.

2. The number of migrants has now reached an unprecedented level, partly because of the industrialised countries' labour requirements and partly because of pockets of economic and structural under-development elsewhere in Europe.

It is now reckoned - though there is no way of checking the accuracy of these figures - that there are about six million foreigners in the Council of Europe member States, and the experts forecast that this figure will soon be sharply exceeded. The 2nd European Population Conference pointed to a figure of about ten million by the end of the 1970s.

3. Quite apart from the size of these figures, however, there is another aspect worth mentioning: the extreme mobility of migrant workers in present-day conditions, owing to ease of communications and to the policies pursued by the immigration countries, which also affect the rapidity of such movements - for instance where they involve periodic rotation of foreign labour.

4. There are also other factors which have to be taken into account - such as the wide variety of nationalities among migrant workers, a variety which increases as traditional sources of manpower dry up. Migrant workers come from further and further afield and from more and more countries. Furthermore, the young ones move about a great deal from country to country, often giving migration between European countries a character of internal migration.

5. There can be no doubting the importance of statistics in present-day society. Government action presupposes the fullest and most accurate possible knowledge of social phenomena, which can only be satisfactorily acquired by means of an efficient system of data collection and processing.

6. Migration statistics are especially important, as it is difficult to keep track of something so shifting and changing as people's movements from one country to another.

7. At present the main defects in the various national systems for compiling statistics of international migration are as follows :

(a) information is inadequate, both quantitatively and qualitatively;

(b) statistics are not comparable. To give a simple example, using certain statistics, the same individual can be counted among the resident population of two or more countries at the same time.

However, data concerning migrant workers and their families are needed more than ever today, now that efforts are being made to get responsible migration policies under way. These data form the basis for sound economic, social and population policy. This applies to both the immigration and the emigration countries.

8. Consequently, there now arises the problem of international collaboration, which must not be confined to the introduction of a few improvements or a few similar criteria into the various countries' statistical systems. Alongside progress in the organisation of statistics, there must be constant exchange of experiences and new ideas with the aim of compiling data which are not only rich in content but also comparable and therefore useful to all concerned.

9. Nor has the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe been blind to the fundamental importance of migration statistics (see Recommendation 533 (1968) on synchronising and harmonising population censuses). Furthermore, the 2nd European Population Conference recommended the Committee of Ministers (Recommendations 6 and 11) to standardise migration counts, at least with regard to certain methods of collecting data, to apply common standards and to engage in a thoroughgoing exchange of information on the occupational and socio-economic features of migration movements.

10. The ideas underlying the recommendations embodied in the resolution may be summarised as follows :

(a) International harmonisation of methods of assembling and presenting data relating to the alien population.

This is only possible if the information recorded is of the same type in all Council of Europe member States.

(b) Use of national statistics systems, which must be improved so as to allow for recording alien population data.

(c) Increase in the efficiency of the most representative sources of statistics.

As each source has a clearly defined administrative purpose, it should not be diverted from that purpose, but its specific function in relation to migration requirements should be accentuated.

(d) Co-ordination between the various statistical sources.

As some sources supply only incomplete information, they should be combined with other sources, with the aim of producing an integrated, co-ordinated system designed to improve knowledge of migration.